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ABSTRACT

In April 1981, the Black Advisory Committee of Valencia Community College (VCC) recommended the implementation of a Black Student Retention Pilot Project to study reasons for the attrition of black students at the college; to identify factors positively affecting student retention; and to develop a computerized system to monitor black student enrollment, retention, and graduation. Activities were undertaken to gain visibility for the project (e.g., creating an advisory board and introducing the project to students through letters and orientation sessions), while at the same time developing a treatment model to provide tutorial assistance and support services to black students, analyze transcripts to identify students who were having academic difficulties or who had withdrawn, and determine student satisfaction with the college. Data collected at the end of the 1980-81 school year indicated that many students did not return to college because of lack of support and outreach efforts. Responses to a survey of non-returning students indicated that personal problems and "stopouts" were the main reasons for discontinuing studies. A separate survey of currently enrolled students revealed that programs stressing black awareness and workshops on study skills and test anxiety were among the support services desired by black students. Appendices include the survey instruments, and student data and comments. (HB)

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STAFF AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

BLACK STUDENT RETENTION PROJECT REPORT

VALENCIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

1980-81

VC 830 041

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Staff and Program Development

Black Student Retention Project Report
1980-81

The Black Student Retention Pilot Project at Valencia Community College was designed to study reasons for the attrition of Black students at the college. Project objectives included indentification of factors which positively affect student retention and development of a computerized system to monitor Black student enrollment, retention and graduation. Implementation of the Project involved two separate but simultaneously-applied processes. A Project Director and an educational adviser worked with college administrators, faculty, staff, community members, and Black students to gain visibility for the Project while concurrently developing a treatment model which could, at a later date, be applied to all students at the college.

Visibility Process - Efforts to gain visibility for the Project included the following activities:

.formation of a ten-member advisory board which included college-wide representation.

.letters to students to introduce the Project.

.orientation sessions for students to clarify purposes and direction of the Project.

.distribution of printed schedule of workshops and events to students and other interested persons.

.periodic letters to inform and to remind students of upcoming workshops, events and employment opportunities.

.memoranda to counseling staff to explain and request support for project.

.presentations to faculty senate, academic affairs staff, cluster managers and other faculty groups.

.involvement of college and community resource persons in workshops.

.letters to the Black Advisory Committee to inform them of implementation of the Project and to request their involvement and participation.

.involvement of community members to demonstrate college commitment to Black student retention and achievement.

.periodic updates to administrators on status of Project.

Process to Develop Treatment Model - The Treatment Model for the Project was developed through the following methods:

.established liaisons with the Vice President for Institutional Services to obtain computerized data on Black student enrollment, graduation, and academic standing.

.established liaisons with the Vice President for Campus Affairs to explore the possibilities of and procedures to provide tutorial assistance, cultural activities and other support services to students who are Black.

.initiated development of computerized monitoring system which would identify non-returning Black students at the end of Session I, 1980-81.

.analyzed data to eliminate transfers, stop-outs and graduates from non-returning students listing.

.analyzed computer-generated transcripts of non-returning Black students to identify those students who withdrew due to academic difficulties.

.analyzed computer-generated transcripts of non-returning Black students to identify courses and/or disciplines with high incidence of withdrawals.

.used questionnaire research to further determine why non-returning Black students discontinued college studies.

.conducted workshops with students to address self image, expectations and to provide information on college services, programs, and policies.

.established office hours on East and West campuses and designated persons who could provide full-time services and information to students in regard to the Black Student Retention Project.

.used questionnaire research to assess student satisfaction with campus environment.

Data collected at the end of Session I, 1980-81 suggest that many students do not return to the college after one or two sessions due to lack of academic support and outreach efforts. Nine thousand, seven hundred seventy-four students enrolled at Valencia during Session I, 1980-81, including 862 (8.8%) students who are Black (see attachment 1). Data available for that time period show that 211 students who are Black (24%) who enrolled at the beginning of Session I, 1980-81 did not return for Session II, 1980-81. Of the 627 grades and withdrawals shown on transcripts of these students, approximately two thirds (423) were D, F, I or W. Three hundred forty-six withdrawals from courses are recorded on the transcripts of these students. This information indicates the lack of a system to monitor student progress and to provide academic support throughout the session prior to withdrawal. (See attachments 2, 3 and 4.)

Following the identification of non-returning Black students, questionnaires were mailed to request information on the factors which prompted decisions to interrupt or discontinue college studies after Session I, 1980-81. Thirty-four former students responded to the survey (see attachment 5) and indicated personal problems and stopouts as the predominate reasons for discontinued studies (attachment 6). Few of the students who responded acknowledged

poor academic performance but attributed difficulties to personal problems which lead to stopouts.

Nine thousand seven hundred eleven students enrolled at the college during Session II, 1980-81 including 911 students who are Black (9.4%). Students who are Black enrolled during Session II, 1980-81 were mailed questionnaires designed to assess their satisfaction with campus services and environment (see attachment 7).

Eighty-four students who are Black responded to the questionnaire. Areas of primary interest included tutorial assistance, Black awareness programs, student organization involvement, study skills, personal development workshops, an Office of Minority Affairs, financial aid information, academic advising and personal counseling (see attachment 8). Comments from respondents are shown on attachment (pp. 17-19).

Concurrent with the development of the statistical monitoring system, the Black Student Retention Pilot Project provided orientation, assessment, counseling, financial aid information and skill improvement workshops to 184 students who are Black. Workshops focused on financial aid, self awareness, assertiveness training, communications skills, Black history, extracurricular activities and career opportunities (see attachment 9).

Evaluation

Due to personnel changes and a resulting delay in project implementation, the outcome and expectations of the project were modified to involve only the development of a treatment model as has been herein outlined.

Recommendations - The following recommendations are made based on student contact and responses to questionnaires.

.the system developed to monitor Black student enrollment, graduation and withdrawal be continued.

.greater interaction with faculty be initiated to insure faculty input and to develop a referral system whereby students who experience academic difficulty may be identified at the earliest possible time and referred for appropriate support services.

.a comprehensive tutorial and academic support program be developed and offered to all students.

.greater outreach to involve students in extracurricular and personal enrichment activities be continued.

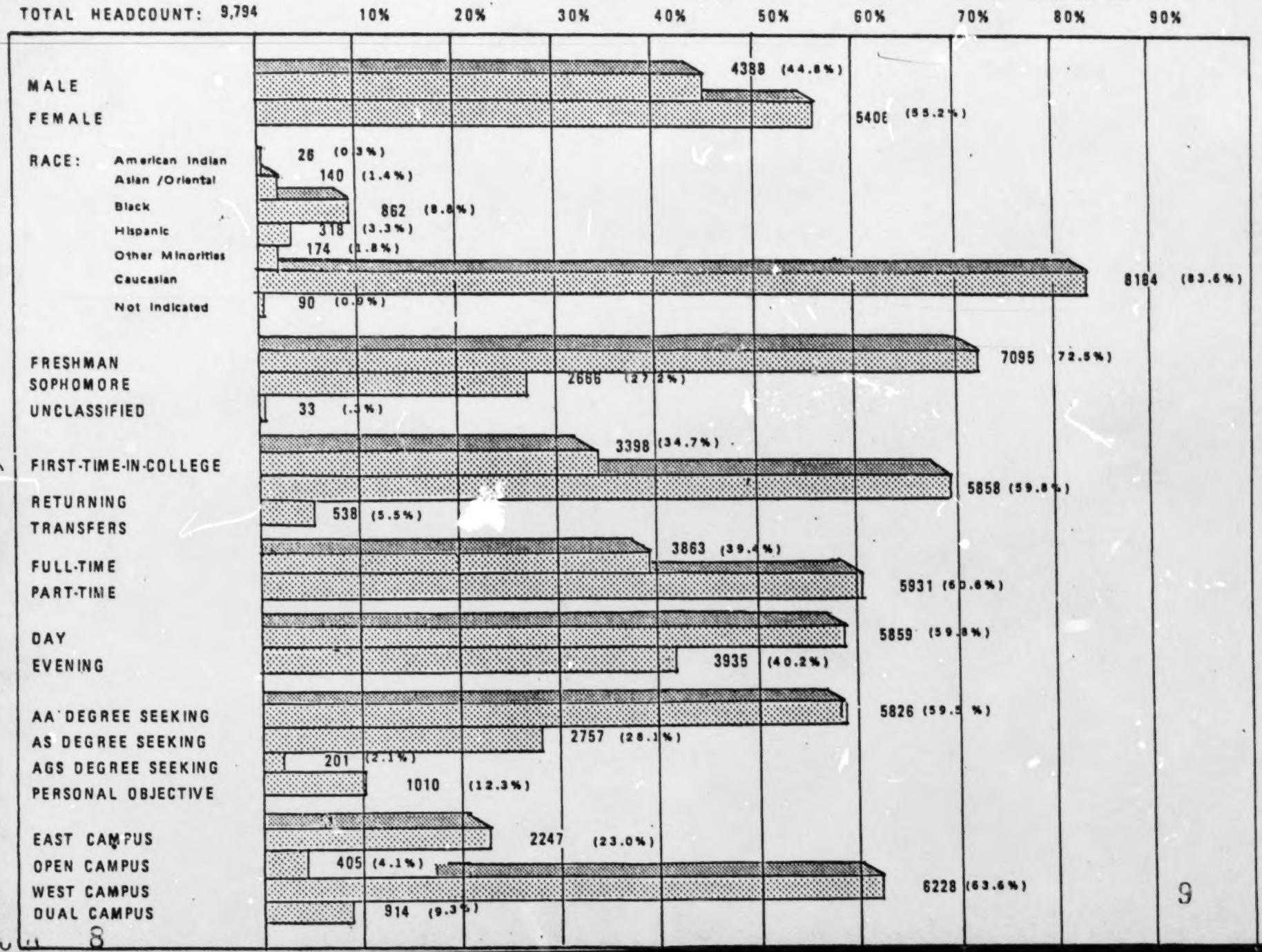
Student retention must be viewed as a college-wide effort which involves all aspects of the educational process including curriculum offerings, student support services and faculty - student sensitivity and interaction. The Black Student Retention Project as highlighted in this report was conducted in the interest of providing the maximum opportunity for success in higher education to all students and may be used as a basis to establish a more comprehensive support services program for high-risk students.

bmmWb

VALENCIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

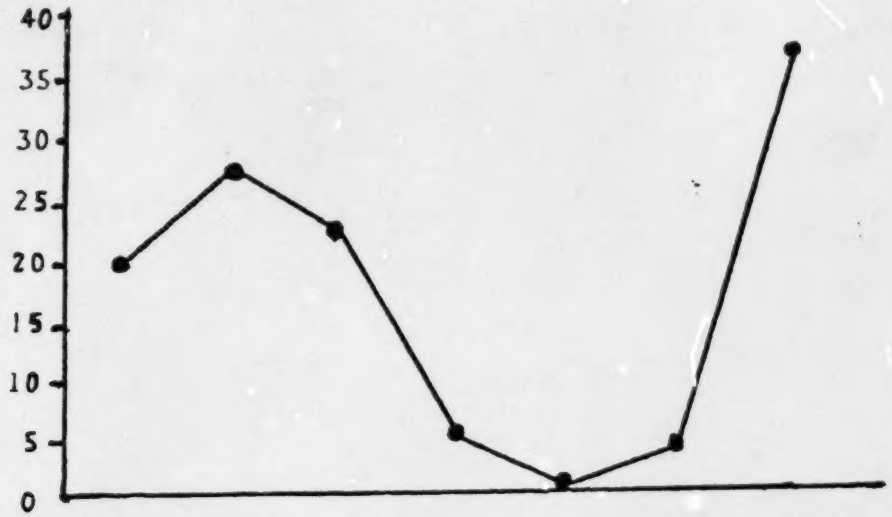
Session I, 1980-81 (Credit Students Only)

Institutional Services
September 1980



Attachment 1

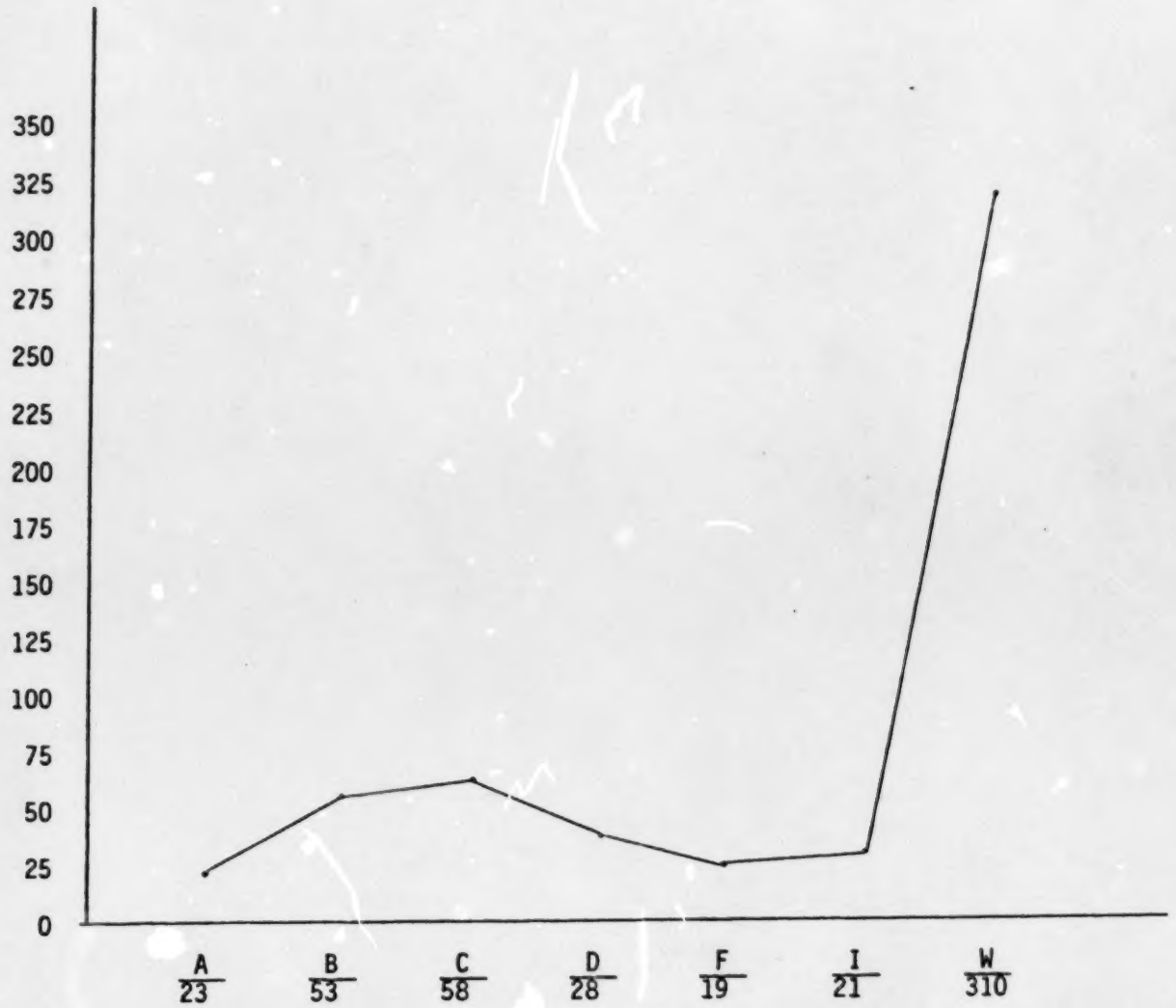
NON-RETURNING BLACK STUDENTS (attended Session I, not Session II)
(EAST CAMPUS)



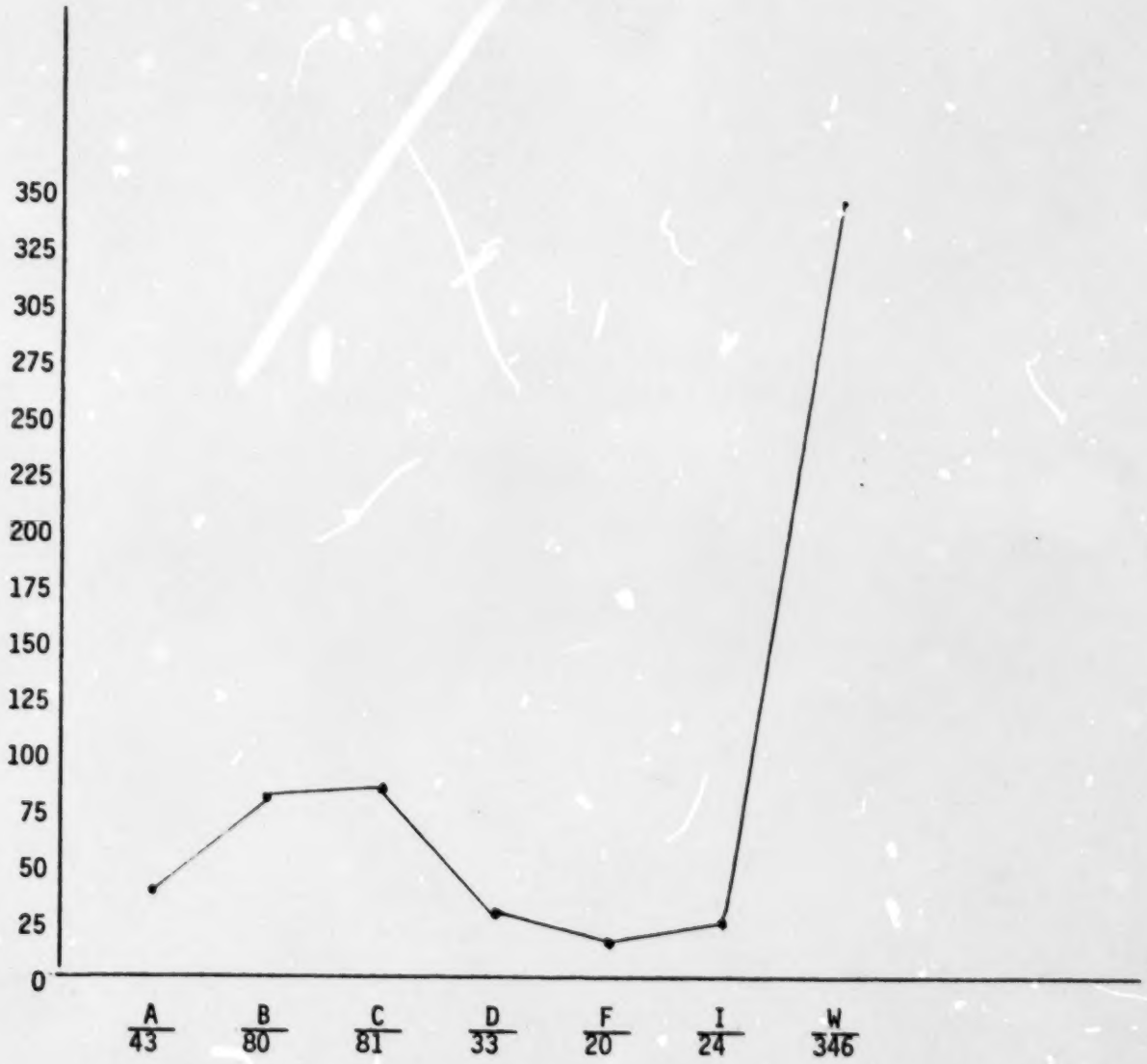
GRADES	A	B	C	D	F	I	n
	20	27	23	5	1	3	36

NON-RETURNING BLACK STUDENTS (attended Session I, not Session II)

(WEST CAMPUS)



NON-RETURNING BLACK STUDENTS (attended Session I, not Session II)
COLLEGE-WIDE
(EAST & WEST ONLY)



VALENCIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE
SURVEY

I did not register for Session II (January, 1981) at Valencia Community College (West Campus) for the following reason(s):

_____ I completed my program of study.

_____ I am presently enrolled in classes at another college.

_____ I have enrolled in a vocational training program.

_____ I accepted employment which would have made it difficult for me to attend classes.

_____ I did not register for classes because of financial reasons.

_____ I did not return due to academic reasons. Explain below.

_____ I did not return due to the social environment at Valencia.

_____ I did not return due to personal problems.

_____ I did not return due to lack of/or insufficient advisement. Explain below.

IDENTIFY SERVICES WHICH WOULD HAVE AIDED YOU IN YOUR STUDIES AT VALENCIA.

_____ Tutorial assistance

_____ Cultural activities

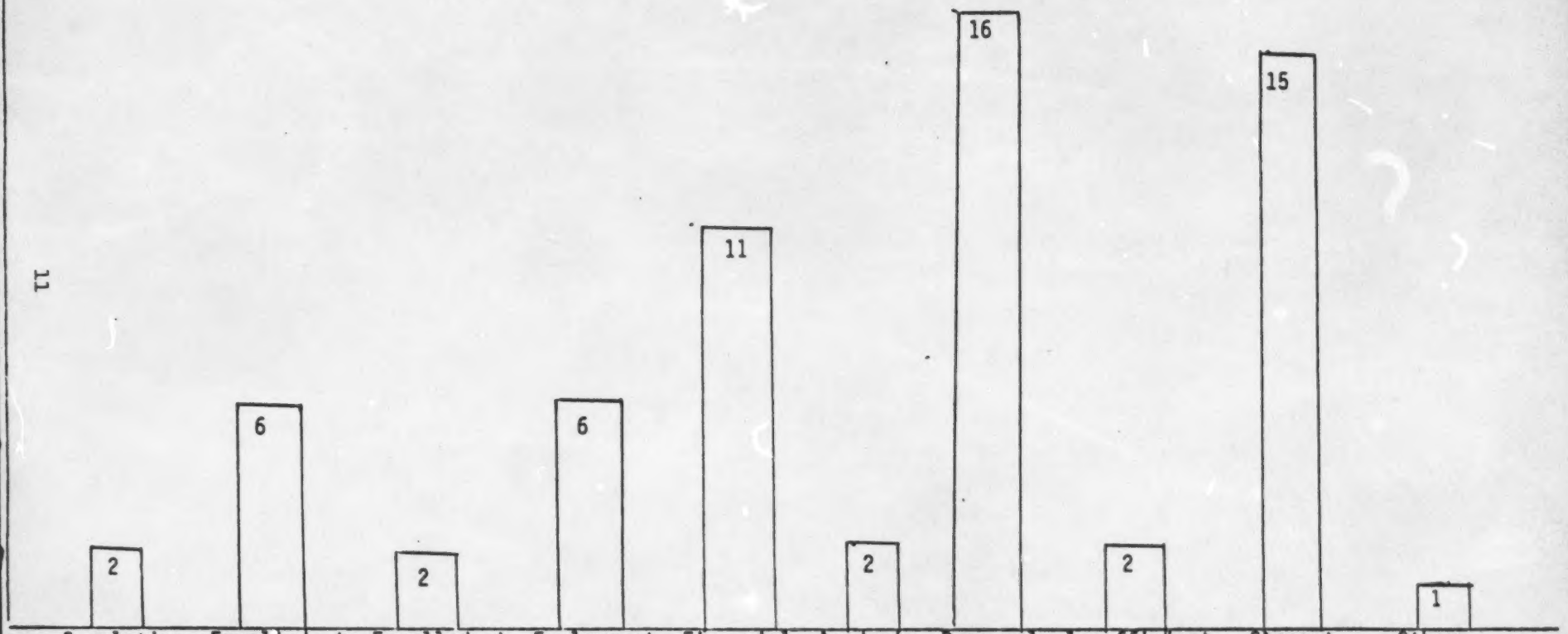
_____ Social activities/Black student organizations

_____ Workshops on study skills, test anxiety, etc.

Others (please list)

Additional Comments:

RESPONSES TO SURVEY OF NON-RETURNING BLACK STUDENTS (enrolled in Session I, not Session II)
211 QUESTIONNAIRES MAILED
34 RESPONSES
STUDENTS COULD CHECK MORE THAN ONE RESPONSE (SEE SURVEY)

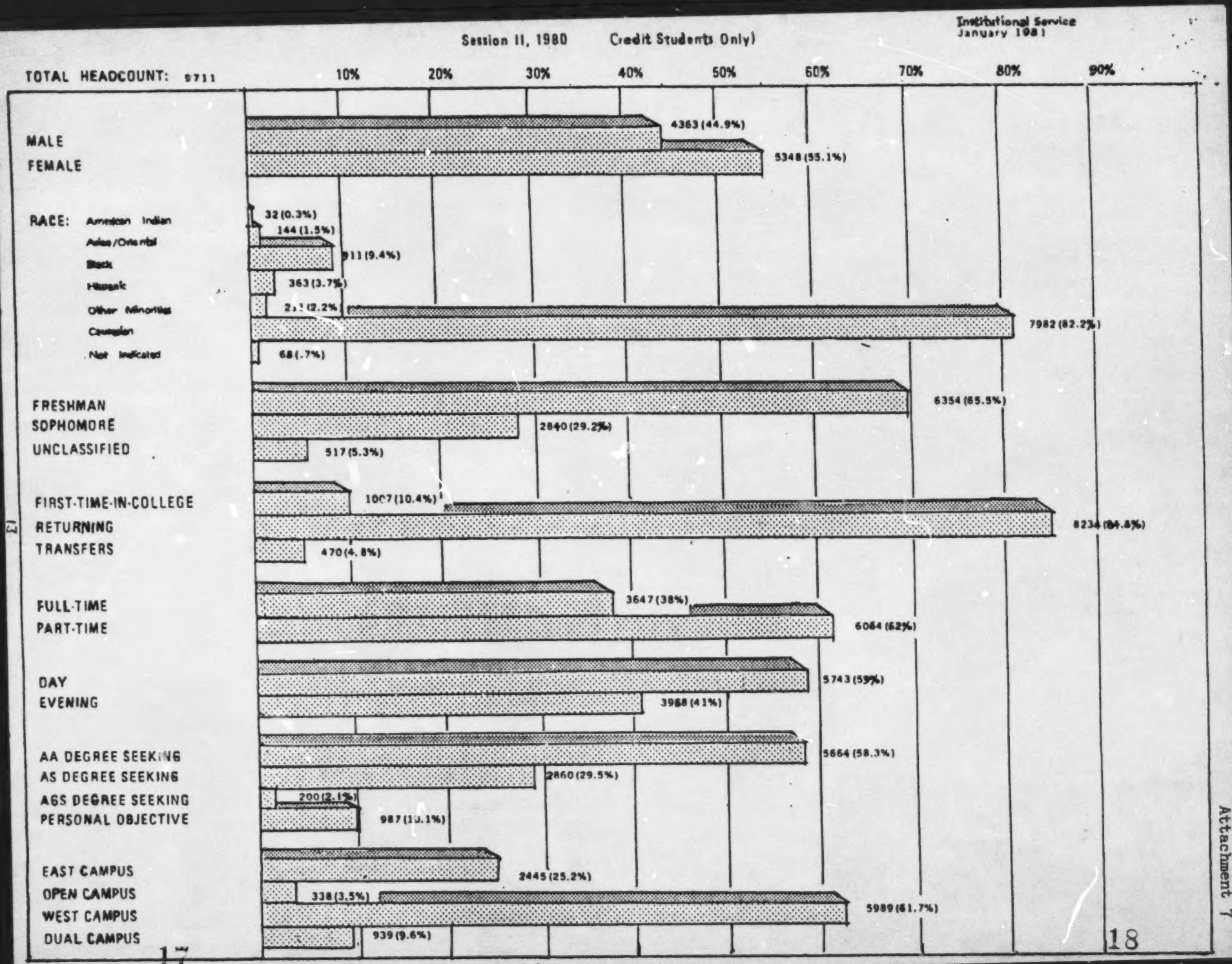


Attachment 6

Services Which Would Aid In Studies

Tutorial	Workshops
9	10

Cultural	Social
2	5



Attachment 7

VALENCIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SURVEY

May, 1981

East Campus Student 8

West Campus Student 75

Special Services Student 6

NOTE: One student did not identify the campus attended.

Please read the following items carefully and respond so that we may be able to serve you with a better understanding of your needs as a Black student at Valencia.

		YES	NO
1.	I feel tutorial assistance should be available on a more extensive basis than it currently is.	64	12
2.	I would like to see more programs stressing Black awareness at Valencia.	76	3
3.	I would like to become involved in a Black student organization on campus.	51	21
4.	There should be more workshops on study skills, test anxiety, and other academic concerns.	74	6
5.	There should be more workshops on Self-Awareness, Communication Skills, Assertiveness, and other personal enrichment topics.	76	3
6.	I feel there is a strong need for an Office of Minority Affairs at Valencia.	70	4
7.	I would like more information on financial aid.	56	21
8.	I would like more academic advising.	66	12
9.	I would like more personal counseling available to me.	54	20

COMMENTS — (Optional) on back

Please tell us about any other ideas you may have about improving the services to Black students at Valencia. Also, please let us know about the services currently provided that you feel are helping you.

Thank you.

BLACK STUDENT RETENTION PROJECT

Participation

			TOTAL
1.	**Orientation**		
	Nov. 5 (West)	Nov. 12 (East)	
	1:00 - 17 5:30 - 3 20	1:00 - 2 5:30 - 2	22
2.	**Financial Aid**		
	Nov. 17 (West)	Nov. 18 (East)	
	1:00 - 21 5:30 - 20 41	1:00 - 1	42
3.	**Self Awareness**		
	Jan. 12 (East)	Jan. 14 (West)	
	1:00 - 3 5:30 - 2 5	1:00 - 5:30 - 16	21
4.	**Assertiveness**		
	Jan. 19 (East)	Jan. 21 (West)	
	1:00 - [illegible] 5:30 - 2 5	1:00 - 9 5:30 - 7 16	21
5.	**Communications Skills**		
	Feb. 2 (East)	Feb. 4 (West)	
	1:00 - 3 3	1:00 - 16 5:30 - 10 26	29
6.	**Black Awareness Month**		
	Observation Program - Feb. 9 15 volunteers & members of A^{2}CS.		25

7. Extra Curricular

Mar. 3 (East)	Mar. 5 (West)	
1:00 - 1 / 1	1:00 - 5 / 5	6

8. Career Opportunities

May 16

9:00 - 12:00 - 18 / 18 — 18

Total — 184

Student Contacts since 1/20/81 - 40

Comments on College Survey

1. I think the Black students of Valencia greatest need is to have more Black instructors to help them understand their lessons better. Too often the student gets discouraged because of the way the instructor would put over his lectures. Students come here to learn. If they had known the lessons or subject before, then they would not come to learn.

2. Question #3 does not pertain to me because I will be graduating in June. However, Black student organizations should be made more aware of on campus because I never knew that any kind of Black organization existed.

3. The services that are helping me are that I'm being well informed on the activities that take place at Valencia. The school should have more programs to help inform the Blacks on happenings in the community, the state and the world in which we live in.

4. I have had an occasion to use the tutorial service offered at Valencia and found it to be a nonproductive session. The tutor (who was White) didn't take the time to fully explain any of my problems to me. She took it upon herself to do the work herself, still leaving me with the same problem in which I came to her for help with. She seemed to have the attitude that the Black students didn't have the educational knowledge, so no matter how hard she'd explain things to us, we still won't comprehend the material. I feel this is the attitude of many of your White tutors toward minorities. What is the use in having these services if we are to be looked upon as ignorant, illiterate and uneducable? I feel these services do need improvement.

5. In response to #2, I would like to see more programs stressing people awareness at Valencia as a collective of the world we live in.

   In response to #3, I would like to become involved in a student organization on campus - people in relation to the full-time employed student.

   In response to #6, I feel there is a strong need for an Office of Human Affairs at Valencia.

6. Valencia needs to recruit more minority instructors (not necessarily Blacks). Only people of the same social-economic status can well understand minority related problems. I do not blame our counterparts, it's just the way society is set up. Also initiate more programs to include Black and White students (limit social made programs but not academic programs). Teach more about Black history and past and present innovators in their fields of science, engineering, social science and many more. Other students think negative of Blacks because all they know is what is portrayed on present day TV.

7. I am presently involved in a Black student organization on campus.

I am especially thankful for the Special Services program in operation at Valencia. Upon admission, it was their guidance and support that steered me in the right direction. It was their assistance that greatly contributed to my present 4.0 GPA. Although I am currently satisfactorily completing my educational requirements, I would like to see more workshops on personal enrichments.

8. I graduated April 23, 1981 at the age of 55 plus - but being a handicapped person it was not easy. The handicapped person needs that extra support; perhaps they need financial aid, like I've been hungry many times but I still kept on going. Counselors should be aware of such things as: If a person is alone, does she or he need help in dressing. I've gone to church and had someone to zip me up in back. Sometimes a phone call to these people helps to let them know you really are interested. Follow ups, after they leave school. Where can they get additional resources to function after leaving school. God blessed me with a home and an acre recently, and I'd like to have help cleaning the grounds. I'd also like to have equipment here so that handicapped (physically in particular), can play, crawl, run, romp in the grass. There is a school on Silver Star Road with this type of play area for children. Only out here it's grass, trees rather than hard ground. That school is terrific and is doing a super job. Then for a ride on a bus, as a trip, to the outskirts would be super for young children. I would like to be available. We as a minority people must reach out, too.

9. I have recently completed my time at Valencia and I must say in response to your letter that the Black students at Valencia need to know more about things that will be going on and how they can get involved. I was only at Valencia Community College for a short period of time and I must admit that when things came up concerning the Blacks to take part in, the information was very scarce. You need better ways of getting things known, more signs, meetings, person to person contact, open communication, etc. and by this you should be able to get more Black involved. Get a club or a group organization started and really publicize it at least three months in advance. Something that is helpful to Blacks, field trips to different job locations, etc. This will give them a better chance to see exactly what field to head toward, and it will be very rewarding. I'm talking from experience. All of this can be done and I only wish I was at Valencia Community College at least one more year to try to steer this program in the right directions. But, nevertheless, you do have my prayers in more ways than one.

10. There should be more of a variety of Criminal Justice courses offered equally on both campuses. I'm presently enrolled in the C. J. program and this is an inconvenience for myself and many other students to commute from West Orlando to East Orlando.

Question #3 depends on what organization it is.

11. I strongly feel the need for seminars as indicated in #5. Please send me further information as it becomes available.

12. I feel that there should be more Black national entertainers on Valencia's campus, people such as Jessie Jackson and soul performers, too.

13. During my time, I still found the Black people not aware of certain activities. Due time will tell in the process. Try to get more Black people to participate in the Program. Otherwise I found the program excellent.

14. I am a working woman and attend classes only at night. I am willing to participate in Student Affairs on campus but only as far as my time will permit.

    In regards to #6, I am not really fully aware nor informed that situation on campus necessitates the need for an Office of Minority Affairs.

15. I don't think that there is enough counseling concerning the opportunities that the Blacks have in the career world.

    There should be more programs in process to help students who graduate and don't plan to go on to get a good job.

    I don't think that Blacks and minority groups are told about all of the financial aid that is available. There should be someone qualified to tell about all the aid that is available. There should be someone qualified to tell about all the aid that is available for groups that really need it.

Note: Names of respondents who made comments are on file in the Office of Minority Affairs.

bmmWd

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